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Locality & Discourse Constraints in Reflexive Resolution

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Reflexive Resolution

- The extent to which the *locality* constraint on reflexives is violated during processing is debated (e.g. Dillon et al., 2013; Patil et al., 2016; Sturt, 2003)

1 John₁ said that Bill₂ hurt himself_{*1/2}

- The conditions under which *nonlocal* antecedents are considered are debated (Parker & Phillips, 2017; Patil et al., 2016; Sloggett & Dillon, AMLAP 2016)

- One factor that may influence processing is *point of view* (Kaiser et al., 2009; Kuno, 1987; Sloggett & Dillon, AMLAP 2016)

2a Mary told John about the picture of himself_?

2b Mary heard from John about the picture of himself

Clause Structure and Reflexives

- Existing studies tested contexts where the local antecedent and reflexive are in the same clause (e.g. Cummings & Sturt, 2014)

3a John said that [Bill hurt himself]

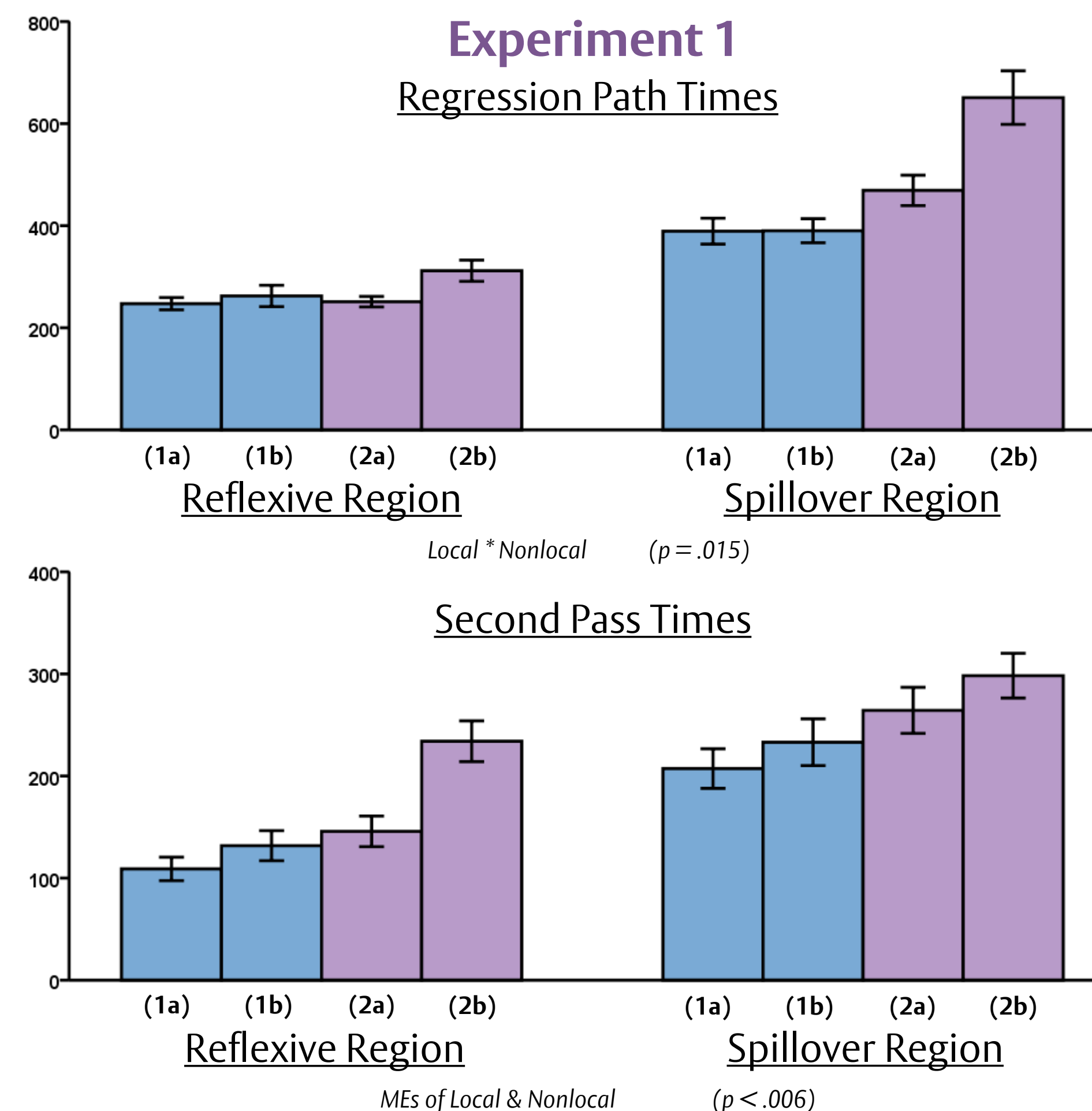
3b John said that [Bill had a picture of himself]

- How reflexives with no clausemate antecedent are processed has not been examined

4 John said that Bill heard that
[there was a picture of himself]

The Current Study

- We investigated how *locality* and *discourse* interact when a reflexive has no clausemate antecedent
- In Experiment 1 (N = 32), the *nonlocal* antecedent was a *source* of information ('John/Jane said...')
- In Experiment 2 (n = 48), the *local* antecedent ('David/Diane said...') was the *source*



(1a) Local Match, Nonlocal Match

John said (heard) that David heard (said) that there was a picture of **himself** just over near the old fireplace.

(1b) Local Match, Nonlocal Mismatch

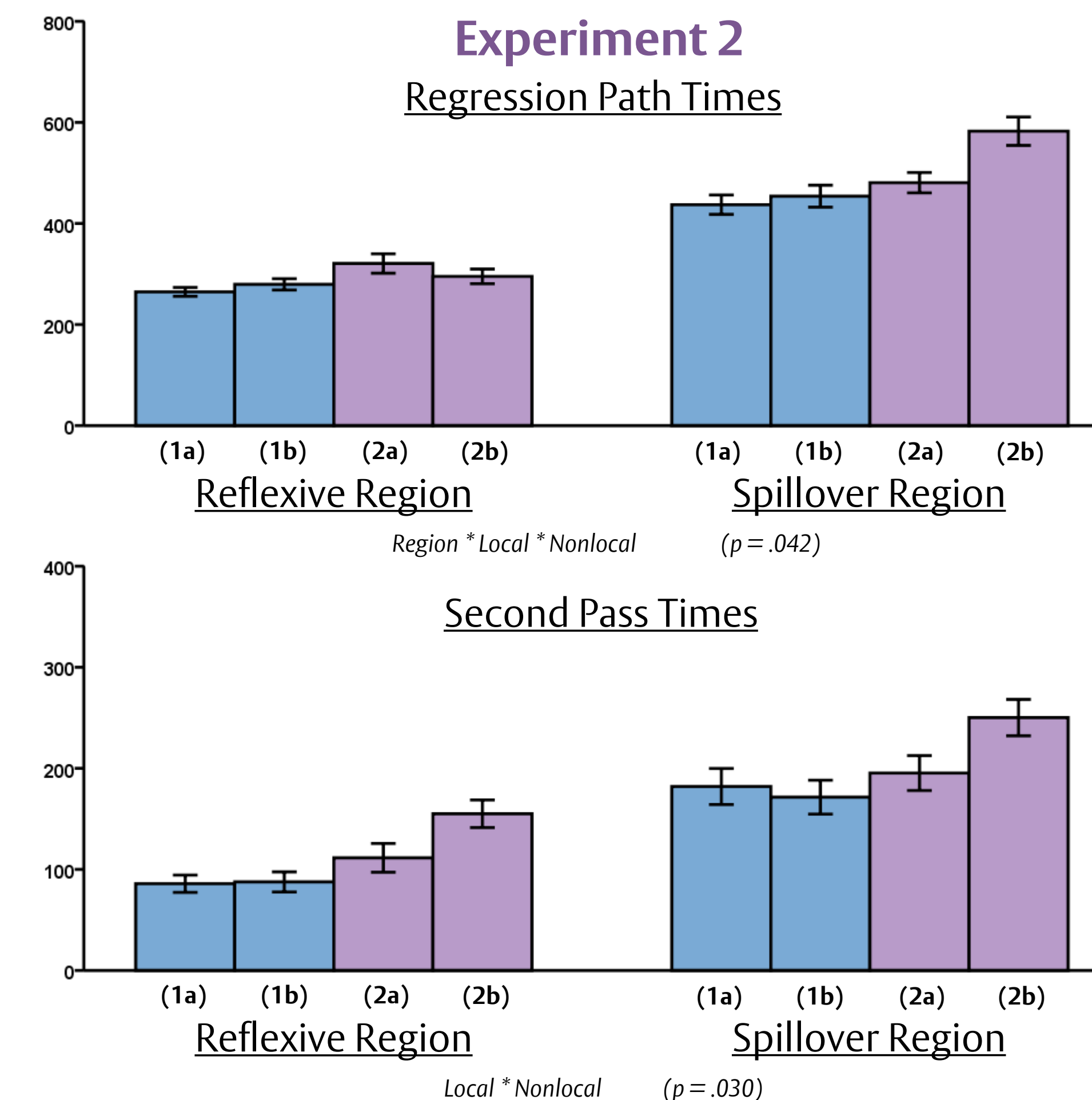
Jane said (heard) that David heard (said) that there was a picture of **himself** just over near the old fireplace.

(2a) Local Mismatch, Nonlocal Match

John said (heard) that Diane heard (said) that there was a picture of **himself** just over near the old fireplace.

(2b) Local Mismatch, Nonlocal Mismatch

Jane said (heard) that Diane heard (said) that there was a picture of **himself** just over near the old fireplace.



Summary

- Results suggest both local and nonlocal antecedents were retrieved based on their gender match with the reflexive
- Some evidence of stronger *local* antecedent preference when it was a *source* of information (Exp. 2)

Conclusions

- Reflexives with no clausemate antecedent readily cue retrieval of both *local* and *nonlocal* antecedents
- At least when a reflexive has no clausemate, antecedent retrieval is guided by *locality* and *discourse* constraints

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